

Office Action Summary

Application No.
09/144,851

Applicant(s)
Kato et al

Examiner
Curtis E. Sherrer

Group Art Unit
1761



☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on Apr 17, 2000

☒ This action is **FINAL**.

☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, **prosecution as to the merits is closed** in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 35 C.D. 11; 453 O.G. 213.

A shortened statutory period for response to this action is set to expire 3 month(s), or thirty days, whichever is longer, from the mailing date of this communication. Failure to respond within the period for response will cause the application to become abandoned. (35 U.S.C. § 133). Extensions of time may be obtained under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a).

Disposition of Claim

- ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
- Of the above, claim(s) 11 and 20 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- ☒ Claim(s) 1-10 and 12-19 is/are rejected.
- ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- ☐ Claims _____ are subject to restriction or election requirement.

Application Papers

- ☐ See the attached Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review, PTO-948.
- ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are objected to by the Examiner.
- ☐ The proposed drawing correction, filed on _____ is ☐ approved ☐ disapproved.
- ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- ☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d).
- ☐ All ☐ Some* ☒ None of the CERTIFIED copies of the priority documents have been
- ☐ received.
- ☐ received in Application No. (Series Code/Serial Number) _____
- ☐ received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

*Certified copies not received: _____

- ☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e).

Attachment(s)

- ☒ Notice of References Cited, PTO-892
- ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s), PTO-1449, Paper No(s). _____
- ☐ Interview Summary, PTO-413
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review, PTO-948
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application, PTO-152

--- SEE OFFICE ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES ---



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Patent and Trademark Office**

Address: COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS
Washington, D.C. 20231

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.
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09/144,851 09/01/98 KATO

Y KATO=15

001444 IM22/0614
BROWDY AND NEIMARK, P.L.L.C.
624 NINTH STREET, NW
SUITE 300
WASHINGTON DC 20001-5303

EXAMINER

SHEPHERD, C.

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

1761
DATE MAILED:

14
06/14/00

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks

Art Unit: 1761

Part III DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restriction

1. This application contains claims 11 and 20 drawn to an invention nonelected with traverse in Paper No. 8. A complete reply to the final rejection must include cancellation of nonelected claims or other appropriate action (37 CFR 1.144) See MPEP § 821.01.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

2. The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

3. Claims 13- are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention. Claim 1 has been amended by inserting a limitation directed to the exclusion of an alkaline agent from the instantly claimed method. Dependent claims containing a limitation to an acid reduction treatment as found in Claims and the specification does not provide a basis for reducing the acidity except by using an alkaline agent (as now claimed in Claim 1).

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

4. Claims 1-10 and 13-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

5. The claims are indefinite because the scope of the phrase "alkaline agent" is unknown. For example, it is not clear if the phrase excludes alkaline compounds naturally present in the juice or alkaline agents that might be added as to adjust the pH or as bacterial nutrients, such as ammonium salts (see page 8, top). A review of the specification provides no guidance in determining the scope of the phrase.

6. Claims 14-19 are indefinite because it is unclear how one can perform the claimed process of reducing the acidity except by using an alkaline agent as excluded claimed in Claim 1.

7. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-20 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

8. It is noted that, in view of the indefiniteness of the instant claims, a proper search could not be conducted. It is further noted that, while Applicant states that the indefinite phrase reads on sodium citrate (trisodium citrate) (used by the previously cited art to adjust the pH), a search revealed that it is considered an acidulant. Therefore, until the scope of this phrase is settled, it is unclear as to what the actual invention is.

Art Unit: 1761

Conclusion

9. No claim is allowed.

10. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

11. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Curtis Sherrer whose telephone number is (703) 308-3847. The examiner can normally be reached on Tuesday through Friday from 6:30 to 4:30.

Serial Number: 09/144,851

5

Art Unit: 1761

12. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Gabrielle Brouillette, can be reached on (703)-308-0756. The **fax phone number** for this Group is (703)-305-3602.

13. Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application should be directed to the Group receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0661.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Curtis E. Sherrer', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Curtis E. Sherrer

June 9, 2000